

Message Text

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44

ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 EB-07 COME-00 L-03 CG-00

DOTE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 JUSE-00 NSAE-00 SCA-01

INRE-00 /031 W

----- 012282

O R 161634Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6804

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS MADRID 6274

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BDIS, CPRS, SP, FR, US (HOVERMARINE CORP.)

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF AMERICAN-OWNED HOVERCRAFT AT VALENCIA

REF: STATE 202840

1. SINCE RECEIPT OF REFTEL AUGUST 15 EMBASSY HAS BEEN IN FREQUENT CONTACT WITH ZEBEDEE OF HOVERMARINE WHO IS NOW IN VALENCIA. OUR CONSULAR AGENT IN VALENCIA ACCOMPANIED ZEBEDEE ON CALL ON MARINE COMMANDANT AND REPORTS THAT OFFICIAL REASON SPANISH ARE HOLDING CRAFT IS THAT IT CARRIES NO DOCUMENTS SHOWING OWNERSHIP.

2. APPARENTLY, FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, A FRENCH COURT ON JULY 9 ISSUED ORDER FOR SEIZURE OF THE VESSEL AND AS FAR AS FRENCH CONCERNED VESSEL, AS A RESULT, ILLEGALLY LEFT FRENCH PORT. SPANISH CUSTOMS OFFICIALS BOARDED CRAFT ON ARRIVAL VALENCIA AT REQUEST OF FRENCH CONSUL THINKING IT A UK VESSEL. THEY WERE SURPRISED TO LEARN FROM ZEBEDEE OF US INTEREST IN MATTER.

3. ZEBEDEE WILL MEET THIS EVENING WITH SPANISH LAWYER TO TRY TO ARRANGE FOR PROPER DOCUMENTATION OF VESSEL SHOWING IT STILL BELONGS TO MANUFACTURER. HE AND
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US CONSULAR AGENT WILL SEE MARINE COMMANDANT MORNING OF

AUGUST 17 AND HOPE TO HAVE DOCUMENTATION THAT WILL PROVIDE
RELEASE OF HOVERCRAFT. ZEBEDEE INFORMED US HE WAS EXTREMELY
PLEASED AND RELIEVED TO HAVE US CONSULAR AGENT ACCOMPANY
HIM TODAY AND THAT HE FELT THIS HAD BEEN HELPFUL.

4. THIS MATTER HAS BECOME A RATHER COMPLICATED ONE
INVOLVING LAWYERS IN UK, FRANCE, US AND NOW SPAIN, AND IT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER SIMPLY PRODUCING SHIP DOCUMEN-
TATION PAPERS WILL SECURE VESSEL'S RELEASE TOMORROW. FOR
THE MOMENT ZEBEDEE IS REQUESTING NO FURTHER USG ASSISTANCE
BEYOND HAVING OUR CONSULAR AGENT ACCOMPANY HIM TOMORROW.
EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW MATTER CLOSELY.
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